

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO

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U.S. DISTRICT COURT
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In the Matter of:

Encrypted Documents and Exhibits

Misc. No. 16-100 (ADC)

GENERAL ORDER

The issue of information protection is a familiar aspect when addressing the use of technology for Court filings, case management and proceedings, and in the modern practice of law. Information technology has become an essential tool for the disclosure and use of electronically stored information. During the normal course of business, it is customary for public agencies and private entities to implement media content protection policies and to utilize a variety of encryption methods to safeguard sensitive electronically stored information. While the Court understands the need for these practices, the Court is also mindful of their impact on its systems and operational practices.

As part of the Federal Judiciary, the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico constantly implements technology innovations and programs designed to: improve the effectiveness and efficiency of courtroom proceedings; securely manage information; protect sensitive information; identify, analyze, and mitigate systems security risks; and, assess and strengthen systems security profiles.

The Court will not compromise its systems or the workflow of its day-to-day operations by allowing submission of encrypted data which requires the use of decryption programs or products which are not part of its data security protocol. The Court finds equally unsuitable that its staff be required to activate secure messaging accounts for retrieval of documents and exhibits.

WHEREFORE, all premises considered, the judges of the United States District Court have unanimously determined that documents or exhibits filed or submitted to the Court shall not be password protected or encrypted. This order shall be effective immediately.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, this 4th day of March, 2016.


AIDA M. DELGADO-COLON
Chief United States District Judge